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ABSTRACT

A competency-based, individualized, English course was designed so that, at any one time, students would be working toward a grade of C, B, or A. While some students, based on a pre-course writing evaluation, might begin work at an advanced level, other students might spend the whole semester attempting to achieve the skills required for a C. Still others might achieve a grade of C at some point before the end of the semester and then choose to withdraw with that grade or to work toward a B. Once a B is achieved, the student can decide to withdraw with that grade or continue toward an A. Within each level, the student works sequentially on four skill areas: words, sentences, paragraphs, and themes. Advancement to the C, B, or A level is determined by the demonstration of competencies on an exit examination taken when the student feels adequately prepared. However, if the student should commit faults of a lower level, he or she must do "back-up" exercises before continuing to work on exit competencies. Students contract with their instructor to complete work on a schedule established within the first two weeks of the course. Students communicate with the instructor primarily through a folder, which contains a form used by the instructors to make assignments and comment on students' performance and the work students accomplish during class. (Competencies for each level are defined in this descriptive report.) (JP)

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A COMPETENCY BASED, INDIVIDUALIZED COURSE DESIGN FOR ENG 101

by

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TC 800 063

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Our program is a three level program: at any time during the semester each student will be working toward a grade of C or B or A. Some students will spend the whole semester attempting to complete the work required for a C. Others will achieve a grade of C at some point before the semester is over. At that point the student is assured of getting a C, and he may choose not to return to class for the rest of the semester, or he may begin work toward the grade of B. When the student completes the work required for a B, he is assured of a B, and at that point again he may choose to not return to class or he may begin working toward an A.

ENTRANCE

The English staff will evaluate all 101 students to determine whether there are some who can begin their work at advanced levels. The evaluation will be based on an in class theme, an out of class theme, and the California Adult Basic Education Exam. (Students who have not taken this standardized test as the semester begins must take it before they can proceed in the course.)

WITHIN EACH LEVEL

All three levels contain these skills: word, sentence, paragraph, and theme. In addition, level one (the C level) contains a sub-paragraph skill. A student must demonstrate competency at the word level before he begins work at sentence level, the sentence level before the paragraph level, etc.

EXIT COMPETENCY

That behavior which allows the student to demonstrate that he is ready to work at a higher level, we call exit competency. The student may take the exit exam when he feels adequately prepared; if he should not pass on the first attempt, he may retake the exam only after completing a unit of study recommended by his instructor. Students may retake exit exams as often as necessary.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

To begin with an example: if a student working at the B level paragraph skill should commit faults of a lower level, for instance sentence fragments, he must do back-up exercises and demonstrate competency at the sentence skill C level before he can continue working toward the exit competency on the paragraph B level. Once a student exits from a skill level, it does not mean that he need never concern himself with the skills again. The Continuing Competencies stated for each skill indicate what is required of the student throughout the course. If the student fails to maintain competency, then he will be sent back to redo the unit of work in question. (However, a student who is sent back to do a back-up section, does not have to do intervening levels over; for instance, a student working on paragraphs who is sent back to the word level will not have to do the sentence skill exit exam again.)

CONTRACT

Each student will meet with his instructor to discuss at what level and skill the student should enter the course. After this initial conference, the student has two weeks to prepare a schedule stating when he will take exit exams. This schedule may be revised by the student by making a written application to the instructor explaining why he will be unable to hold to the schedule; a new schedule will then be devised by the student and submitted for the instructor's approval. The instructor is not responsible for making sure that the student completes the required course work within the term. If the student consistently breaks his contract, he must be aware that he will most likely be unable to complete the course.

ACHIEVING A GRADE

The theme skill is the highest within each grade level; therefore, when a student demonstrates competency at the theme level, he achieves the grade whether it is on the third day of the course or during final exam week. Note that all applicable continuing competencies must be observed as well as the theme level behavior. Note, furthermore, that theme skill competencies are achieved by three CONSECUTIVE themes that successfully meet all requirements. For instance, a student who had finished two themes at the B level successfully, who then included a poor paragraph in the third theme, would have to do back-up exercises on paragraphs and perform the B-paragraph exit competency successfully before he could begin again to write three more B-level themes, and so on until he has written three acceptable B-level themes in a row. If, however, the student should make an error concerning a theme skill rather than one not meeting continuing competency, the student may revise the theme in question rather than beginning a new series of three themes.

THE GRADE W

A student who is so dissatisfied with the grade he has achieved that he wishes to take the course over can withdraw up till and including the last class meeting. The student's folder will be used by his next instructor in making assignments so that the student will not need to repeat work unless he fails to meet the continuing competencies.

INCOMPLETES

In order to receive an incomplete, the student must have completed at least one of the three exit themes for the level he is working on. He must also submit a written request to his instructor one week before the final exam date which will include a time schedule for the completion of the other two themes. If the themes completed after the final exam time are not competent, the student receives the grade already achieved except for C level students who will receive a D.

FOLDER

Each student will have a folder which will act as the primary basis for communication with the instructor. This folder will be brought to each class by the instructor and must be returned at the end of the period with all new work. Each folder will include an assignment sheet. It is IMPERATIVE that this sheet be filled in at the end of each class period. This provides the instructor a means to check the student's work daily and make the appropriate assignment for the next class as well as comment on the student's performance. It also provides the student the opportunity to ask the instructor questions or make comments. If the student fails to fill in what work he has completed and turned in, the instructor will automatically assume the student's absence and will make no new assignment. Requests to take exams or for conference should be made in the student's comments section.

NAME Virginia Wolfe

LEVEL I

DATE	SKILL	TEXT & METHODS USED (Workshop, cassette, group, etc.)	WORK COMPLETED	STUDENT REMARKS	EVALUATION/ RECOMMENDATION
10/4	Sentence Fragment	Educulture 6 part 1 cassette	Educulture workbook 6 part 1	Can I take Exit exam for sentences Friday?	
10/6	EXIT EXAM FOR SENTENCES		took exam		passed exam - begin to work on sub-paragraph skills. See Mills, Lesson 7

DAILY PROCEDURE

At the beginning of each class period, the student will get his folder and check the instructor's comments and recommendations for that day's work. The students may choose to work in small groups, on their own, or in consultation with the instructor. The staff may or may not occasionally schedule traditional class meetings. The instructor will attempt to see each student each class meeting if only for a few moments.

PREPARING PAPERS

EXERCISES

Exercises are completed to help prepare you for the exit competency exam. No grades are recorded for the exercises, and in practically all cases they can be graded by the student. When this is possible, you will grade your exercises. This gives you immediate feed back as to what you are doing that is right or wrong.

Make sure you place ALL completed and self-scored exercises in your folder. The instructor will use this information in advising you what you need to do next in order to succeed.

REMEMBER: If work is not recorded on your folder sheet, the instructor will not know what you have or have not done.

PREPARING PAPERS CON'T

THEMES

1. Write in blue or black ink, or do your own typing on fairly heavy paper.
2. Write on only one side of the paper.
3. Leave ample margins, especially on the left.
4. Write on every line of the paper.
5. Fill out the cover sheet; place it on top of the theme.
6. Fold theme from top to the bottom.
7. At the bottom of the theme identify it as follows:

   Edwin Newman
   Eng. 101
   Jan. 16, 1978
   Theme 2 Level I

8. Place theme in folder and indicate on folder sheet that theme has been turned in.

FINAL EXAMS

There will be no final exam as such in the course; students will have the opportunity to turn in work up till and including the time scheduled for the final exam.

COMPETENCY STATEMENT
LEVEL ONE

WORDS

1. Spells common words correctly.

2. Distinguishes among commonly misused homonyms: to, too, two; their, they're and there; its and it's; quiet, quite.

3. Uses standard verb forms.

4. Limits writing vocabulary to words contained in working vocabulary.

SENTENCES

1. Writes short simple sentences with appropriate punctuation.

2. Compounds simple sentences using the following 2 methods:

   A. Independent clause; conjunctive adverb, independent clause.

   B. Independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause.

3. Corrects fused sentences and comma splices in 3 ways:

   A. Simple sentence. Simple sentence.

   B. Independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause.

   C. Independent clause; conjunctive adverb, independent clause.

4. Corrects sentence fragments caused by (1) subordination (2) lack of subject (3) lack of predicate (4) incomplete structures.

5. Corrects agreement errors.

6. Corrects pronoun reference errors.

7. Corrects faulty parallelism.

8. Proofreads for irresponsible sentences.

9. Corrects shift in tense.

10. Corrects misplaced modifiers.

11. Corrects major pronoun case errors.

12. Corrects shift in person.

13. Proofreads for clarity.

14. Corrects major comma errors (e.g., using only one comma to set off interrupting phrase in middle of sentence; using comma between subject and verb)

15. Proofreads for other major punctuation errors, such as lack of question marks, incorrect use of parenthesis, incorrect use of colons.

SUB-PARAGRAPH

Writes short simple sequences of simple and compound sentences with clear meaning relationships and generally satisfactory syntactical interreferences.

PARAGRAPH

Writes paragraphs with two or three levels of generality and a minimum of 50 words with topic sentence as the first sentence followed by a series of supporting sentences.

THEME

Writes themes containing: (1) an introductory paragraph with a thesis sentence as the last sentence in the paragraph, (2) three supporting paragraphs containing topic sentences first followed by a series of supporting sentences, (3) a concluding paragraph summarizing the basic points.

EXIT & CONTINUING COMPETENCIES
LEVEL ONE

WORDS EXIT BEHAVIOR

Writes at least 250 words that convey information with no spelling or verb form errors working in the words to, too, two; their, they're, and there; its, it's; and quiet, quite.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Performs word tasks with 99% accuracy.

SENTENCE EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Given a sample of 25 sentences containing errors, corrects the errors with 92% accuracy.
2. Writes 20 responsible sentences containing appropriate punctuation, with 100% accuracy; 10 of these sentences must be compound; both methods of punctuating compound sentences must be represented.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Makes no more than one sentence error per 200 words in paragraphs and themes.

SUB-PARAGRAPH EXIT SKILL

Writes 10 coherent sequences of independent clauses; 5 of these sequences must contain at least 3 independent clauses. Compound and simple sentences must be represented; four different methods of methods of syntactical interreference must be used; 4 different types of sequences must be represented.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Uses clear meaning relationships and meaning links with 100% accuracy.

PARAGRAPH EXIT SKILL

Writes 5 paragraphs of 3 different types, each paragraph having two or three levels of generality and a minimum of 50 words, with topic sentence first, followed by a series of supporting sentences.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY
(Level One only)

Continues to write paragraphs containing a minimum of 50 words with two or three levels of generality represented and topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph.

THEME EXIT COMPETENCY

Writes 3 consecutive themes of different types containing: (1) an introductory paragraph with a thesis sentence as the last sentence in the paragraph, (2) three supporting paragraphs containing topic sentences first followed by a series of supporting sentences, (3) a concluding paragraph summarizing the basic points.

The three acceptable types of themes are (1) argumentative, (2) comparison, and (3) narrative (personal experience). At least two of these three types must be represented in the three consecutive themes.

If a student turns in a theme which does not meet continuing competencies, the student must do a sendback exam on the skill in question and then begin the series of 3 consecutive themes which are acceptable again. If a theme is faulty because of theme structure, etc. the student may repair the theme in question and continue his series without beginning again.

COMPETENCY STATEMENT
LEVEL TWO

WORDS

Uses correct ly forms for adverbs.

Distinguishes between commonly confused words, such as idea/ideal, accept/except, etc.

Uses correct comparitive form for adverbs and objectives.

Uses concrete, precise terms.

SENTENCES

Uses subordination and coordination of clauses and phrases in writing clear, brief, and dense sentences.

PARAGRAPHS

Writes paragraphs with two and three levels of generality with topic sentence near the beginning, topic sentence at the end, and split topic sentences. Uses appropriate levels of abstraction to control levels of generality. Chooses diction most appropriate for the audience and purpose and uses it consistently.

THEME

Writes themes containing: a variety of extended introductions with theses variously located; two levels of support with subordinated paragraphs to complicate the basic structure; a definite end achieved through concluding paragraph or appropriate climactic development, etc.

EXIT & CONTINUING COMPETENCIES
LEVEL TWO

GENERAL COMMENT

A student who begins to work on Level Two may take the option of beginning on any skill level with the instructor's approval. However, if a lower skill competency is not met, the student must do the send back exam.

WORD EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Writes 15 original sentences, or pairs of sentences, that illustrate the proper use of commonly confused words such as idea/ideal, accept/except, etc. with 100% accuracy. Five of these sentences must be complex.
2. Writes a descriptive passage of 75 words in which 100% of the substantives and 75% of the verbs must be concrete.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Distinguishes between commonly confused words with 99% accuracy.

Uses concrete diction in paragraphs and themes.

SENTENCE EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Given 10 series, each consisting of approximately 7 kernal sentences, combines each series into one clear, concise sentence with appropriate punctuation and with 90% accuracy.
2. Writes 5 original sentences, with appropriate punctuation, 2 of which must be complex, and lists the kernal sentences (each sentence must contain at least 6 kernals) with 100% accuracy. Placement of the main clause must vary.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY (Sentence)

In paragraphs and themes, demonstrates an ability to subordinate and coordinate within sentences, punctuating them appropriately to achieve clarity, conciseness and density.

PARAGRAPH EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Writes 5 responsible paragraphs, one each of the following types:
   A. Two levels of generality, topic sentence at the end, 75 words minimum.
   B. Three levels of generality, split topic sentence, 150 words minimum.
   C. Three levels of generality, topic sentence near the beginning, 150 words minimum.
   D. Three levels of generality, topic sentence at the end, 150 words minimum.
   E. Two levels of generality, split topic sentence, 100 words minimum.
2. Identify the rhetorical profile used in three paragraphs and give variations in level and texture for each paragraph. Rewrite two of the paragraphs given so that a new rhetorical profile is established.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

In paragraphs, shows a diversity in paragraph length and placement of topic sentence. Chooses diction most appropriate for the audience and purpose and uses it consistently.

THEME EXIT BEHAVIOR

Writes three consecutive, responsible themes containing among the three, at least two varieties of extended introduction with theses variously located and at least two varieties of conclusion. Each theme must contain two levels of support with subordinated paragraphs to complicate the basic structure.

COMPETENCY STATEMENT
LEVEL THREE

WORD

1. Controls connotation.
2. Recognizes the changing value and use of words.
3. Ennumerates his or her own dialects.

SENTENCE

1. Is aware of some usage rules observed in the dialect of academicians and can conform to them: e.g., possessive before the gerunds, nominative case for substantive complements, etc.
2. Experiments with effects of periodic, balanced, loose, and parallel sentences in his or her own dialect.
3. Analyzes master sentences for nuance of structure, use of imagery, and voice.
4. Surveys historical prose styles, observing how sentence length, syntex, formality of diction, etc., vary in the dialectical development of English prose style.

PARAGRAPH

Writes paragraphs made sophisticated in form by control of length, balance, rhythm, structure, and position of the topic idea.

THEME

Generates essay form in which form is an extension of content.

EXIT & CONTINUING COMPETENCIES
LEVEL THREE

GENERAL COMMENT

A student who begins to work on Level Three may take the option of demonstrating several levels of competency simultaneously. For example, the paragraph competency may be demonstrated within a theme. Word or sentence exits may take the form, also, of theme exits.

WORD EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Writes three accounts of a major news story using connotations to achieve the following points of view: definitely negative, definitely positive, and as neutral as possible. Writes a fourth account that is his or her own statement.
2. Takes five words that are conspicuous in their change and writes a responsible paragraph for each describing their changing value and use. Words may be taken from the following list or substituted with permission of the instructor: nigger, ain't, chairperson, housewife, be as an auxiliary, shit, rip off, cop, competency, use of shall and will, levels, energy, cosmic, queer, weird, crazy, jargon.
3. Enumerates his or her own dialects and characterizes them in terms of vocabulary and syntax, noting non-standard items commonly used and indicating range of use: circumstances and people. Presents this information in one of the following forms: theme, paragraph, listing with samples.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Controls connotations to aid in the creation of a personal stance.

SENTENCE EXIT BEHAVIOR

1. Given five sentences which violate linguistic distinctions often made by academicians, finds each violation and "corrects" it.

SENTENCE EXIT BEHAVIOR CON'T.

2. Given five master sentences, comments on them in short, responsible paragraphs, noting nuance of structure and use of imagery and voice. Writes ten sentences following given rhythmical and structural patterns and analyzes two of them, noting nuance of structure and use of imagery and voice.
3. Given examples of prose from different periods, analyzes them in terms of sentence length, diction, syntax, etc. leading to conclusions about period style. Structure of the analysis is devised by the student.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

Uses knowledge of nuance of structure, imagery, voice, sentence length, diction, syntax, etc. when writing sentences individually, in paragraphs, and in themes.

PARAGRAPH EXIT BEHAVIOR

Writes five responsible paragraphs with multiple levels of support, at least two of which have no topic sentence although the topic idea is clearly definable. Paragraph structure is not obtrusive but represents logical movement. Length should vary according to purpose with at least one short, emphatic paragraph and one lengthy and precise paragraph represented. Rhythm and balance should be of interest in their own right and supportive of purpose.

CONTINUING COMPETENCY

In themes, writes responsible paragraphs made sophisticated in form by control of length, balance, rhythm, structure, and position of the topic idea. Uses paragraphs not only to present units of thought, but as structural devices.

THEME EXIT BEHAVIOR

Writes three consecutive, responsible themes, with a minimum of 500 words, at least one of which is 1500 words. At least one theme must include secondary sources and be internally documented. The form may be an adaptation of traditional essay form or may be original, but in either case it must be an

individual solution to the rhetorical problem. Topics must be derived from one of the following broad categories and have the instructor's approval:

1. Language in relation to the student's dialect
2. Topic suggested by readings
3. Investigation of personal experience
4. Bullshit
5. Topic suggested by work in another course

Ideas expressed in the themes must be apparently internalized and signigicant

Supporting material must be varied, intrinsically noteworthy, logical, and responsible or charming.

GLOSSARY

1. Appropriate punctuation - *Level One: standard punctuation as described in conservative handbooks of style, such as Commanding Paragraphs

*Level Two: standard punctuation for independent and dependent clauses as described in conservative handbooks, such as Commanding Paragraphs

*Level Three: punctuation as an outgrowth of style, such as illustrated and explained in The New Strategy of Style

2. Dense - Carries a great deal of information; nothing extraneous is included; a dense sentence is transformed from a relatively high number of kernal sentences.

3. Level of Abstraction - The more abstract a word is, the higher the number of specific items it covers - for example, cattle covers fewer items than livestock, livestock fewer than animal; thus cattle is the lowest level of abstraction among these three words. The lowest appropriate level of abstraction would be the term which includes all necessary specific items and no more.

4. Major Pronoun Case Error - Pronoun case errors excluding nominative case for substantive complement, possessive case as subject for gerund, objective case for double

objects of preposition, confusion with <u>who</u> and <u>whom</u> and <u>who</u> and <u>that</u>.

5. <u>Meaning Relationships</u> - The logic which locks two or three clauses together preventing prose from being a jumbled collection of unrelated thoughts.

6. <u>Responsible</u> - Worth saying; not so obvious as to be transparently an item to fill out a pattern; not obvious bullshit.

7. Rhetorical Problem - (1) The problem of communicating precisely certain information and/or ideas to a particular audience under particular circumstances.
(2) At a higher level, the problem is to state the idea, or arrange the observation, so that the writer clarifies to herself exactly what she means, conveying the precise tone without descending into private language or belaboring the point until its energy is lost.

8. Syntactical Interreference - Methods of linking sentences together; using words and phrases that in any way recall previous statements -- in the broadest sense, repetition. Examples of specific methods are: synonyms, pronouns, word repetition, nouns summarizing previous assertions, conjunctive adverbs, etc. In any good prose these devises occur constantly.

PLAGIARISM

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word plagiarize as follows: "to take and pass off as one's own the ideas, writings, etc. of another."

Cheating or plagiarizing can take many forms on the college campus. Beginning college students frequently are not fully aware what is considered plagiarism. For this reason the following list has been drawn up.

I. On examinations

1. Copying the answers from another student.
2. Copying passages from a book or magazine.
3. Bringing notes, etc...to class (whether on paper, cuffs, etc.)
4. Asking someone for the answers to test questions.

II. On outside papers or themes

1. Copying from books or magazines without quotation marks.
2. Copying passages from books, altering a word here and there.
3. Having someone else write the paper or theme for you.
4. Copying a theme or paper somecne else has written in the past.
5. Having someone correct the mistakes on your paper. (Someone else may read it, suggest revisions or reorganizations, but you must do the revision and reorganizing.)
6. Rewording the exact same idea found in a book or magazine.

III. Class themes

1. Bringing outlines or notes to class unless specifically permitted by the instructor.
2. Copying a theme written at home.

The student who seeks this type of help, as well as the student who knowingly gives this kind of help is guilty of plagiarism.

It is the responsibility of every student at this University to report to the instructor any case of plagiarism he is aware of. This is not tattling -- this is ethical behavior.

.....

I fully understand what is considered to be plagiarism at the University of Kentucky, Madisonville Community College.

DATE_____ NAME_____

COURSE _____

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